

Indoor Water Saving Tips

Indoor water savings can lower water and wastewater (sewer) costs and energy costs too!

Free & Easy

- **Wash only full loads** of laundry in your washing machine or full loads of dishes in your dishwasher.
- **Turn the water off.** Avoid letting the faucet run when shaving, brushing teeth, and washing.
- **Skip the pre-rinse.** Check to see if your dishwasher can clean dishes without pre-rinsing them. Newer dishwashers don't require pre-rinsing.
- **Avoid using the toilet as a trash can.** Put waste in the waste basket rather than the toilet.
- **Shorten your showers.** Reduce your shower time and you will rack up big savings in water and energy. If you really want to save water, limit your shower time to five minutes, or less.
- **Take showers instead of baths.** A bathtub holds about 50 gallons of water- much more than a normal shower would use. (A typical shower uses less than 20 gallons.)
- **Reuse clean household water.** Collect all the water that is wasted while waiting for the hot water to reach your faucet or showerhead. Use this to water your houseplants or outdoor planters.

Some Cost, Greater Savings

- **Fix leaky faucets and toilets.** Easy-to-fix leaks in and around your home can waste more than 10,000 gallons of water every year, which can significantly raise water and wastewater bills. Fixing leaks promptly is an easy way to save money and water. The most common culprits are leaking toilets or dripping faucets. Tests for toilet leaks annually by putting a few drops of food coloring into the toilet tank. Wait 15 minutes without flushing. If the color appears in the bowl, you have a leak. For most toilet leaks, replacing the toilet flapper and/or the filling mechanism will correct the problem. A leaky faucet is often the result of a bad rubber washer. The washer is typically located under the handle and can be easy to repair, if you have the right tools. Check the Internet for instructions on how to repair leaks. Many local home centers also offer good advice. If in doubt about any repair, seek a plumbing professional.
- **Update your fixtures.** In the bathroom, install a water-saving showerhead that uses 2.5 gallons per minute, or less. Replace older bathroom faucet nozzles (aerators) with new ones that are rated at 1.0 gallons per minute, or less. Older kitchen faucet nozzles (aerators) can be replaced with new ones that are rated at 2.0 gallons per minute, or less. Aerators cost only a few dollars.
- **Replace older toilets with new high-efficiency models that at use 1.6 gallons per flush, or less.** Toilets bearing the Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense label use 1.28 gallons per flush (20 percent less than the current plumbing standard) and must demonstrate reliable flushing.
- **Upgrade to a water-efficient clothes washer.** You'll save thousands of gallons of water a year and energy too. These machines also reduce drying time and require less detergent.
- **Replace dishwashers with Energy Star® models.** You'll save both water and energy. Dishwashers typically use less water than washing dishes by hand.



Outdoor Water-Saving Tips

Outdoor watering savings can lower summer water bills and keep more water in the rivers for fish and other wildlife. Watering wisely can also lead to a healthier lawn and garden because it prevents over-watering, a leading cause of pest and disease problems. For more information on smart watering and other natural yard care techniques, visit Bellevue Natural Lawn and Garden website (www.bellevuewa.gov/natural_lawn_intro.htm), or call Utilities at 425-452-6932.

Free & Easy

- **Sweep driveways and sidewalks** instead of hosing them with water.
- **Cut back unnecessary watering.** Get to know your plants. Trees, shrubs, and perennials, if well-established and well-placed, need less water than newly planted areas.
- **Check for soil moisture before watering** to be sure it's time to water. Dig into the soil with a trowel a few inches. If it feels moist, hold off.
- **Water deeply, but infrequently.** Wetting the soil surface without getting water to the root zone does the plants no good. The goal is to keep roots moist. But don't over do it. After watering, check the soil to see if moisture has penetrated to the roots. Use what you learn to guide future watering. Then, let the top few inches of the soil dry out between watering so that the roots can breathe.
- **Minimize evaporation loss.** Water early in the day or late at night, and when the wind is calm.
- **Adjust sprinklers.** Avoid watering the street, driveway or sidewalks. Choose sprinklers with spray patterns that match the shape of your lawn or garden area.
- **Adjust watering to weather conditions.** Avoid watering when it rains.
- **Limit water periods.** Set a kitchen timer when watering to remind you to shut the water off.
- **Let your lawn go brown.** In the summer, lawns can go dormant. Most lawns will recover with rain and cooler temperatures. Soaking the lawn a few times each summer may help some lawns recover better in the fall.

Some Cost, Greater Savings

- **Wash your car at a commercial car wash.** You will save water and keep pollutants out of local streams and lakes.
- **Repair leaky faucets, hoses, and sprinklers.** A leaky faucet can waste 20-100 gallons of water per day. It all adds up!
- **Add a shut-off nozzle to your garden hose.** Garden hoses can deliver over ten gallons a minute if left unattended.
- **Select the right watering system.** Drip irrigation is the most efficient way to water most plantings except lawns. Soaker hoses also work well. Both apply water directly to the soil with minimal water loss to evaporation or runoff. Efficient watering also helps prevent plant diseases.
- **Use automatic sprinkler systems efficiently.** Automatically controlled irrigation systems can make watering easier, but they often waste large amounts of water due to improper scheduling and poor maintenance. Follow these smart-watering tips:
 - Inspect and tune up your system each spring before the watering season starts.

- Adjust your watering schedule to track weather conditions at least once or twice a month.
 - Install a system rain shut-off device to avoid watering during the rain.
 - Inspect your system a few times each year while it is running. Look for and repair leaking or broken sprinklers, and adjust blocked or misaligned spays.
- **Mulch your planting beds.** Mulch is a material spread on the soil surface, such as compost, leaves, or wood chips. Mulch slows water evaporation loss, helps reduce weeds, and keeps the soil loose.
- **Improve water penetration in lawn areas.** Help water reach lawn roots by aerating your lawn.
- **Improve your soil.** Mix in compost throughout planting beds when planting new areas to add nutrients and increase the soil's ability to absorb and store water.
- **Choose low-water use plants.** When buying plants, favor those that need less water for immediate beauty and future water savings. When planting, be sure to group plants with similar water needs together. A good design avoids mixing plants that need regular water with those that need little to no water.

For more information, visit Bellevue Utilities (www.bellevuewa.gov/utilities.htm) or call 425-452-6932.